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Congress of the United States

Committee on Foreign Affairs

House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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March 27, 1981

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☐ In Full

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date ☐ Declassify on ☐ Reason

The Honorable Alexander Haig
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As a result of my recent trip to Argentina, I have received several letters from a variety of sources concerning the disappearance of a number of young Argentinian men and women, some of them highly talented professionals.

These letters reflect the high probability that these young people are dead. The fate of persons abducted is generally considered to be torture and death. Hearings held last year on the phenomenon of disappearances clearly demonstrate that disappearances result in killings, that the victim is deprived of life and liberty without trial or the possibility of counsel or appeal, and that governments that practice abductions victimize families by keeping them in a state of agony and uncertainty.

One letter alleges that there have been 20,000 to 30,000 cases of disappeared persons in Argentina. A recent press release of the Organization of American States places this figure at between 5,000 and 20,000 cases since 1975.

Disappearances constitute a form of terrorism exercised by the state against its enemies. The phenomenon is not unknown in modern history as the Stalinist purges and the abduction and mass genocide of Jews in Germany in the 1930's demonstrate. As this Administration launches its attack against terrorism, it must do so in the context of a policy that regards disappearances as a form of terrorism. I do not think that we can close our eyes to the phenomena in Argentina.

I trust you would agree that important U.S. interests relative to Argentina can best be achieved to the extent that these concerns are properly reviewed and satisfied.

Honorable Alexander Haig
March 27, 1981
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Accordingly I request that if possible the Department provide a report on the status of the following individuals who have been reported as having disappeared:

Juan Carlos Matire

Daniel Eduardo Bendersky

Rubin Alberto Stockdale

Gustavo Marcelo

Maria Gabrielo

Mirta Melida Schwalb

Jorge Marcelo Dyszel

Mauricio Fabian Weinstein

Enclosed are copies of the translations of various letters sent to me on their behalf.

Thank you for your consideration of this serious and distressing situation.

With best wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours,


Chairman

CCZ:pgw

Enclosures